

Montgomery County Federation of Republican Women

April 11, 2023

County Council Chair, Gabe Albornoz
and members of the County Council
Montgomery County, MD

Dear Chairman and Members,

RE: **Operating Budget — Oppose property tax hikes & recordation tax**

The **Montgomery County Federation of Republican Women** which includes 400 members strongly oppose any tax increases including increases in the recordation tax. We appreciate the opportunity for you to hear our voice today.

GCAAR listed a number of reasons they strongly oppose the 10% tax increase, and we agree with these reasons.

I know some of you as fellow Leadership Montgomery graduates. As a 2013 graduate, I remember the shock of my whole class when Blair Lee, a Gazette Columnist and leader in the county, spoke about upcoming doom and gloom. I looked up my notes from his speech and will highlight four things he said:

- Montgomery County is heading down the wrong road because of peculiar politics.
- This county is extremely liberal and proud of “nannyism,” (as in our government and its policies are overprotective and interfere needlessly with personal choice.)
- Montgomery County is altruistic to a fault and our government spends money on social issues, to the point that we are running out of money and can’t afford to continue on this path.
- Our elected officials of Montgomery County can’t seem to bring home the bacon. Baltimore pays for 28% of the school budget while our county pays 80% of this budget (note: he accurately predicted the MoCo percentage would be lower in the future as our county became poorer.)

I highlight Mr. Lee’s previous statements because they ring true a decade later. Because of the nation’s economic prosperity before the pandemic that created surpluses and because of the overzealous stimulus funds that our county received during the pandemic, our county has become accustomed to living above its means for a number of years now. But the gravy train is drying up.

Do you know the expression that if you put a frog in boiling water, it will jump out but if you put a frog in tepid water and gradually increase the temperature to boiling, the frog will stay in the pot until it dies? As elected officials, you have established a practice of slowly raising the temperature of the water while the residents gradually adapt

unknowingly. However, the members of MCFRW have been paying attention. They are jumping out of the pot that is about to boil. A number of our members are making the choice to leave Montgomery County. The county executive's 10% tax increase proposal is a wake up call to many who are now seeing how hot the water is becoming.

The data from the U.S. Census Vintage 2021 Estimates show a loss of population in Montgomery County of 7,234 people while a previous estimate predicted an increase. It is also important to note that between Year 1 and Year 3 estimates (using data between April 1, 2020 to June 2021), it shows a loss of mostly white residents: 4,412 white only males and a loss of 4,473 white only females. This shows that people are already starting to leave, even before you implement any tax increases. It should be clear that tax increases will accelerate the exodus to VA, NC, NJ, FL and other areas that are more balanced in their budget approach and policies. <https://www.census.gov/.../popest/2020s-counties-detail.html>

While many of my club members are frustrated with the trajectory of Montgomery County, we still have hope that a more balanced approach to education, transportation, climate change and business growth will emerge. However, the water is getting too hot for us. For these reasons, we hope that you reject any tax increases. Making difficult budget choices is a lot harder than raising taxes, but our county will be stronger if you show fiscal constraint and sensible leadership.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Laurie Halverson, President
Montgomery County Federation of Republican Women
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